

Message Text

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STADIS////////////////////////////////////

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SUBJECT: TRADE CENTRE CLOSING

REF: STATE 257415

1. SINCE ARRIVING IN FINLAND IN MAY 1973 I HAVE GREATLY INCREASED THE EMPHASIS OF EMBASSY HELSINKI ON THE COMMERCIAL PROGRAM. EXPANDED EFFORTS ON BEHALF OF THE STOCKHOLM TRADE CENTRE HAVE BEEN PART OF THIS PROGRAM. I BELIEVE THAT THE PRESENCE AND THE OPERATIONS OF THE STOCKHOLM TRADE CENTRE CONTRIBUTE SUBSTANTIALLY TO ADVANCING US INTERESTS IN FINLAND. THE CLOSURE OF THE TRADE CENTRE WOULD BE A SETBACK TO THE ADVANCEMENT OF THESE INTERESTS FOR THE REASONS SET FORTH BELOW.

2. FROM THE POINT OF VIEW OF FINLAND THE US TRADE CENTRE IN STOCKHOLM HAS PROVIDED AN IMPORTANT FOCUS ON THE UNITED STATES IN GENERAL AND US PRODUCTS IN PARTICULAR FOR MANY YEARS. THE EMBASSY IS PLANNING A MAJOR PROMOTION EFFORT IN FINLAND ON THE OCCASION OF THE 10TH ANNIVERSARY SHOW IISDAICH 1975 OF THE TRADE CENTRE WHICH WILL FEATURE ELECTRONIC DATA PROCESSING, A TOPIC OF GREAT INTEREST IN FINLAND AND TO WHICH MANY FINNISH COMPANIES WILL SEND REPRESENTATIVES.

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3. THE STOCKHOLM TRADE CENTRE HAS BECOME WELL KNOWN TO FINNISH BUSINESSMEN AND TRADE ASSOCIATIONS. IT PROVIDES AN UNUSUAL OPPORTUNITY FOR FINNISH BUSINESSMEN TO SEE NEW US PRODUCTS AND MAKE CONTACT WITH THE REPRESENTATIVES OF US FIRMS SEEKING REPRESENTATION. INTEREST IN FINLAND IN US PRODUCTS AND TECHNOLOGY ISN HIGH, BUT THIS HAS NOT BEEN MATCHED BY THE INITIATIVE OF US COMPANIES IN INVESTIGATING THE MARKET POSSIBILITIES IN FINLAND.

4. THE PRESENCE OF US BUSINESSMEN AT THE EXHIBITIONS AND PRESENTATIONS ORGANIZED AT THE TRADE CENTRE HAS BEEN A SUBSTANTIAL COMPENSATION FOR THE ABSENCE OF US TRADERS INVESTIGATING THE FINNISH MARKET. FINNISH BUSINESSMEN HAVE TRAVELLED TO STOCKHOLM IN SUBSTANTIAL NUMBERS. FOR THE SEPT. 1973 PRINTING AND PUBLISHING SHOW 96 FINNS REGISTERED ATTENDANCE. MANY ATTENDED THE PHYSICAL AND CHEMICAL MEASUREMENT SHOW (41) MARCH 1974 AND THE PULP PAPER AND CONVERTING EQUIPMENT EXHIBITION #68) IN MAY 1974. A LARGE NUMBER ARE EXPECTED TO ATTEND THE POLLUTION CONTROL SHOW IN DECEMBER AS A RESULT OF EXTENSIVE COMMERCIAL USIS PROMOTION ACTIVITIES.

5. OUR FRIENDS IN FINLAND COMPLAIN OF RELATIVE NEGLECT IN COMPARISON WITH THE LARGE PROGRAMS MOUNTED BY THE RUSSIANS AND OTHERS TO INFLUENCE FINNISH ATTITUDES. TO CLOSE DOWN THE TRADE CENTRE COULD BE VIEWED AS DECLINING US INTEREST IN THE NORDIC AREA TO THE DISCOURAGEMENT OF OUR FRIENDS.

6. THE COUNTRY PROGRAM FOR FINLAND POINTS OUT THE NEED FOR GREATER EFFORTS TO MEET EUROPEAN COMPETITION IN THE FINNISH MARKET IN VIEW OF FINLAND'S ASSOCIATION WITH THE COMMON MARKET. THE CLOSING OF THE TRADE CENTRE IS A STEP BACKWARD AT A TIME WHEN WE SHOULD BE MOVING FORWARD. BASED ON ITS KNOWLEDGE OF THE MARKET, GOOD WILL THAT IT HAS DEVELOPED, AND QUALITY OF ITS SHOWS, THE TRADE CENTRE IS MAKING AN IMPORTANT CONTRIBUTION TO THE SALES OF US PRODUCTS IN FINLAND. TO ABOLISH IT AT THE PRESENT

TIME WHEN A MAXIMUM EFFORT IN SUPPORT OF THE US BALANCE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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OF TRADE AND PAYMENTS IS NEEDED, IS FALSE ECONOMY AT ITS WORST. THE TRADE CENTRE NEEDS MORE FUNDS SO THAT IT CAN EXPAND ITS REGIONAL OPERATIONS. SHOULD THE TRADE CENTRE BE CLOSED, MANY OTHER PROGRAMS WILL HAVE TO BE EXPANDED TO FILL THE GAP.
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